

Social Service Human Relations Board
Minutes of the Regular Meeting, Thursday, March 22, 2007

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL: Acting President Wasko called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Present were Franz, Soglin, Nielsen, Chen. Absent was Member Villareal. Staff: Jones, Brown and Wright.
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the February 22, 2007 meeting were tabled until the April meeting. Acting President Wasko requested one edit.
3. REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PUBLIC SERVICE ALLOCATIONS – Member Franz recused himself

Staff member Terri Wright addressed the Board. She explained that the Board's role is to review staff recommendations and forward comments to City Council. Wright reminded the group that the public hearing for the FY 07/08 proposed Action Plan is scheduled for April 17 during the City Council meeting and will include the review of the public service recommendations.

Wright explained that public service funding is capped at 15% of entitlement plus program income funds. Public Service funding for FY 2007/2008 is anticipated to be \$235,178. This is a decrease from the current year's funding. Wright reminded the Board that FY 07/08 is the second year of a two-year funding cycle.

Wright stated that funding will be cut approximately 2% for all subgrantees currently funded except for the American Red Cross, Alameda Service Center and BANANAS, who will both receive larger cuts. The Red Cross receives the largest award amount and will receive an 8% cut in funding. BANANAS has agreed to a 14% cut, which is anticipated to result in fewer children and families served through the child care voucher program. In anticipation of a funding decrease in FY 07/08, East Bay Community Mediation was funded only for FY 06/07 and is therefore not included in FY 07/08 projections.

Wright explained that last year's program income was higher than usual and resulted in increased amounts of public service dollars. Projected funding levels for FY 07/08 are down 10-12% in allocations compared to FY 2005, and the higher than usual level of program income is not anticipated to continue. Wright explained that it is time to begin exploring sustainable bases of funding for grantees.

Wright explained the spreadsheet of proposed grantees. The Board asked about cutting one subgrantee instead of a little of each. Wright commented on the necessity of each of the services provided and the challenge of choosing which services not to support. Acting President Wasko suggested the possibility of helping service providers attain grant funding and seeking additional sources of funds for public services. She thanked staff Wright for providing the information.

SPEAKERS – Ms. Liz Varela from Midway Shelter, thanked the Board and the the City for their support. Varela explained that Building Futures for Women and Children operates a 24-hour shelter for victims of domestic violence. Midway shelters 200 persons per year in Alameda. The shelter can house 25 at a time. The longest stay is limited to four months, and the shelter is always full. Ms. Varela reported they are seeing a trend in homeless families being placed in permanent housing more quickly than single women. Varela also explained that there are not many shelters equipped

to handle homeless people with mental illness. Varela stated that the Alameda Homeless Network and citizens from Alameda are great supporters of the program: almost every day, all the meals served at the shelter have been donated. The Alameda Homeless Network uses other sources for funding and collaboration with; Bessie Coleman Court; Alameda Food Bank; ARC; McKinney Vento programs at schools; referrals from BACS and Alameda Family Services. The funding received is important and every penny counts. A few years ago Midway lost a different funding source and the shelter was closed during the day at that time.

Acting President Wasko asked if there was anything we can do to help? Ms. Varela stated that writing letters would help. She further stated that receiving the funding for new trailers (15yrs old) was a very important and will increase the safety of those who stay at Midway. The Board thanked her for coming, and for being here in Alameda.

Mr. Jim Franz from American Red Cross – Alameda Service Center, stated he wants to support the recommendations from staff. The ARC will accommodate their funding cuts through reductions in a staff person's work hours. Mr. Franz stated that although they are reducing staff he is willing to step down from a few other Boards to create more time for ARC. The decrease in staff will not affect working hours for service, and ARC will maintain the same hours of operation. He stated that safety net services don't work with holes, and many services depend on other services. Franz spoke positively about the ARC's support from the city and recommended any additional funds received restore cuts to BANANAS first. Mr. Franz was thanked by the Board for being gracious, and was asked to please express an apology to his case manager.

M/S Acting President Wasko motioned to agree to staff's recommendations and if program income target exceeds cuts of Bananas, any extra finding to ARC. She then withdrew the motion. Discussion continued including concerns that the cut to ARC cause a ripple affect in the community.

M/S Member Chen motioned to support staff recommendations. Excess funds will be used to restore BANANAS first, then other funding restoration would be at the discretion of staff. Member Nielsen seconds and unanimous.

3-B. RECOMMENDATION TO CO-SPONSOR MULTI-CULTURAL EVENT –

Member Soglin provided an overview of the Alameda Multi-Cultural Community Center (AMCCC)'s plan to host a multicultural festival on May 5, 2007. The AMCCC has asked ATAH / SSHRB to be a co-sponsor. The working event title is Multi-Cultural Event of Festival of Families. If SSHRB co-sponsors the event, it is to include entertainment and approximately 50 tables advertising community organizations.

Acting President Wasko and Member Franz recommended renaming the event to something other than Festival of Families. There was much discussion regarding the 6-week time frame to coordinate the event date and staffing logistics.

M/S Member Chen not to co-sponsor the event due to the short time frame and staffing challenges. A letter is to be drafted by ATAH and forwarded to AMCCC. Message should include well wishes and leave open possibilities of future partnership. Acting President Wasko seconds and unanimous.

Member Franz excused for illness.

M/S Acting President Wasko and Chen to combine agenda items 3-C. and 3-D, and unanimous.

3-C. & 3-D. ADOPTION OF WORKGROUP PLANS AND WORKGROUP STATUS REPORTS–

Family Services Workgroup - Acting President Wasko reported that the workgroup is working on goals, and combined projects with AAWG, including addressing the lack of low cost dental care providers accepting Medi-Cal. If the EveryOne Home Report needs additional work, the Family Services Workgroup has expressed interest in supporting such efforts.

Assessment and Awareness Workgroup – Acting President Wasko reported this workgroup is developing an Alameda specific resource guide in the form of magnets or a pocket guide. They are reviewing a more general promotion of needs assessment. The creation of the “Swipe Card,” has a lot of energy behind it, but there are technical issues that still must be explored. \$40,000 of CDBG technical assistance funds are allocated to this project.

Sister City Workgroup – Member Chen reported that the workgroup met with the Mayor. They have a commitment from the Mayor to go to China in fall 2007 possibly mid-September. The City Manager has not committed to going, but seems interested. After the return from China, the workgroup will again explore the possibility of becoming a non-profit entity. An Alamedan Girl Scout troop will travel to Lindigo, Sweden for a visit. Asuchio, San Salvador was mentioned but there was nothing to report.

Alamedans Together Against Hate – ATAH met with Sentinel Fair Housing and were provided with information about Housing Discrimination issues. Sentinel has seen an increase in disability discrimination is complaints. They plan to meet with other agencies like COA and APD about community issues.

4. BOARD / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS – The Board inquired as to the planning of the Mayor’s July 4th Parade. Staff mentioned that Member Franz is usually on the committee and can report in April if not sooner.

5. ADJOURNMENT – Acting President Wasko adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Jones
Secretary, Social Service Human Relations Board

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